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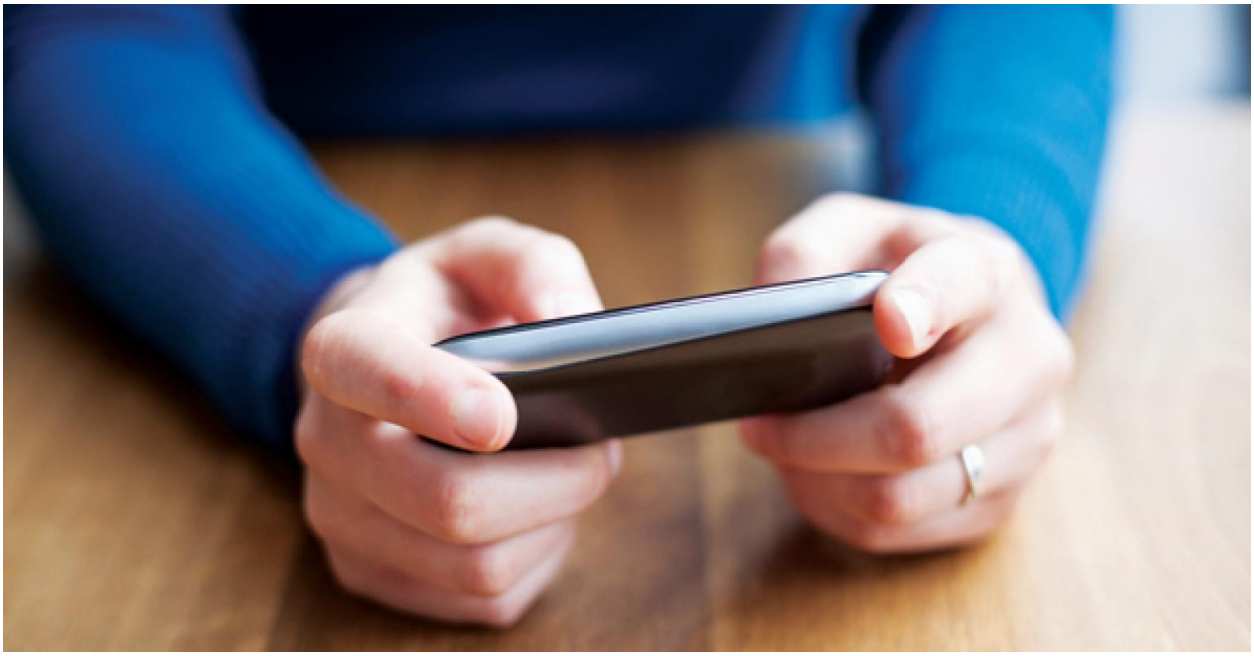

TECHNOLOGY

Snappy Kraken Expands Convos Texting Platform to Broker/Dealers

The marketing technology firm first announced the service at the 2021 AdviceTech.LIVE virtual conference.

Rob Burgess | Nov 15, 2022

Snappy Kraken announced that its Convos texting platform has been expanded to include broker/dealers in addition to RIAs.

Snappy Kraken first revealed plans to launch and support compliant text messaging between advisors and clients at the AdviceTech.LIVE virtual conference held in August 2021. This was part of a larger trend as customer relationship management software developer Redtail Technology also revealed plans to launch and support compliant text messaging between advisors and clients at that time.

Information Classification: General

Convos is an application that is managed from the advisor's desktop and allows advisors to send text messages to a specific client or a group of clients, from their office phone number, which can be landline or mobile.

Greg Drozdow, Snappy Kraken's director of business development for Convos, said the provider “felt that there was a need to assist advisors in driving more real-time conversations.”

“What better way to do that than through the most commonly used direct message marketing channel there is, which is text messaging?” said Drozdow. “We’re just a text message marketing solution that allows advisors to send one-on-one messages to their audience, their clients, their prospects and then we give them a bunch of marketing tools. We also have campaigns similarly themed to what we do at Snappy Kraken, but just for text.”

He said while Convos officially launched in December 2021, it had existed in a beta program before that. “We’ve come quite a far way,” said Drozdow.

While the Convos infrastructure can potentially support any advisory firm, Drozdow said that for now, its focus will be on Snappy Kraken’s existing clients before opening it up to everyone at the start of 2023.

“We finally have built the tech and compliance infrastructure to be able to support these broker/dealer organizations,” said Drozdow. “We did a lot of learning in our first year and a half of what compliance items and things we need.”

He said incorporating basic archiving and journaling requirements was key. Convos' journaling capabilities work with Smarsh, Global Relay, Zix, RIA Compliance and Presults, among others.

“We learned that we don’t have the infrastructure in tech to build out everything that every broker/dealer might need right now, but we have the basics,” he said.

For firms already a bit beyond the basics and using established texting-compliance provider MyRepChat, Snappy Kraken has created an integration, seamlessly allowing its continued use, according to Drozdow.

Advisors with a MyRepChat number can then easily activate it on Convos and use its marketing tools, content and communications automation; and those firms can continue to use MyRepChat's compliance tools.

“Soon the content inside of Snappy Kraken that a lot of advisors use, like our lead-generation campaigns and our newsletters will also now have email, social posts and text message elements,” he said, noting that the firm currently lacks any direct integrations with CRM providers, however.

Information Classification: General

Convos also enables advisors to automate and track the text opt-in process that is mandated by the Federal Communications Commission.

“You have to get permission to text your clients and prospects in any system,” said Drozdow.

“We’re continuing to develop our content that we build for our advisors so that way we can reduce the amount of time and effort that advisors need to make in marketing decisions,” he said.

Back in 2021, when Convos was first announced, Snappy Kraken also debuted a feature called “Leads Never Cold,” a library of pregenerated content to start conversations with clients and introduce specific finance-related information. All content in the library, which includes emoticons, memes and gifs, is “FINRA-approved,” according to Snappy Kraken.

Drozdow said RIAs and broker/dealers will be able to use “Leads Never Cold” in Convos to “stay top of mind by putting out a quick text educating their audience.”

“The goal of the sequence is to help drive more personal engagement and retention. That’s where these automations will come in,” said Drozdow. “Based on different groups and tags that advisors set for their audience, we can match the content focuses that has different goals or tags associated with that and match it to those individuals and help with overall content strategy for our advisors.”

Attempts at compliant texting in financial services are not new. Securities America and Merrill Lynch began experimenting with it back in 2018, while Edward Jones had experimented with advisors sending texts to clients' phones from their desktops back in 2015.

What is fairly new is the ability for firms to buy off-the-shelf technology to support both marketing and communications automation as well as the compliance and archiving requirements from the SEC and FINRA when it comes to texting.

The market has heated up in the last two years with providers well known to advisors like Redtail with its CRM and marketing offerings (acquired by Orion in April, with integrations recently announced) to relative newcomers like MyRepChat specific to the texting space as well as large compliance and archiving firms including Hearsay Systems and Smarsh supporting both RIAs and broker/dealers.

Information Classification: General